

# THE FALCON FLYER

## September 21, 2009



Dear Floral Families,

We wrote in this space a couple of weeks ago about the measures of success for our school; last week, the state released 2009 MCAS results. These results reveal significant success for Floral Street, with *the highest aggregate achievement in our school's history*. For the first time, *Floral Street students scored in the top 10% of the state in three out of the four tests administered* at grades 3 and 4, with the fourth coming in the top 16%.

This may seem confusing given the letter that all Floral Street families received late last week from Dr. Sawyer. This letter, required by the federal *No Child Left Behind* law [NCLB], indicated that Floral Street made "Adequate Yearly Progress" [AYP] for its students with special needs but for the first time did not for our low-income students. **How can this be possible when our achievement levels, as described above, are so high?** There is not enough space here to fully walk through the regulations and issues at hand, but there are a few important considerations:

- The *No Child Left Behind* law has, in fact, been an important tool in raising the achievement of disadvantaged populations. The focus on ensuring high levels of achievement for all our students, and not allowing districts to "gloss over" achievement gaps between different groups, **is an achievement itself for the cause of equity in our educational system.**
- There are many who would argue, however, that in its implementation the law is neither fair nor helpful to schools in reaching these goals. As an illustration in Floral Street's case, **the performance of all our students and all of our student groups exceeds state averages by significant margins, margins that in most cases are increasing.** Examined over a five year period, rather than one or two year cycles the law dictates, our school and students have made significant progress in all areas. Examining "value added" as groups of students moved from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, all groups made significant gains.
- To illustrate the larger context, "Adequate Yearly Progress" refers to the progress a school or district is making towards 100% of its students scoring Proficient on MCAS in the year 2014. As that year approaches, fewer Massachusetts schools make AYP – in 2009, a majority of Massachusetts schools did not. As Dr. Sawyer mentioned, some schools, including the other Shrewsbury elementary schools, do not have the student subgroups of more than 40 students that Floral Street does, a size which triggers application of AYP regulations.

Most important, with or without any external pressure, the staff and administration at Floral Street are committed to continuous improvement for its own sake. This goes for groups of students as well as individuals **and is a core value that will not change. We are as proud of this as we are of our high levels of achievement shown in our MCAS results.**

**Parents are vital partners in this mission to continuously improve.** To that end, we invite and encourage you to attend our annual **Curriculum Night**, beginning with grades 1 and 2 this week. We expanded our program last year in order to provide a "big-picture" overview of our curriculum and practices at Floral Street School, and the feedback was quite positive. **We'll begin at 6:45 pm** with a presentation that provides that overview; you'll move into your own child's classroom

shortly after 7:00 pm with more time to focus on the details of the daily life of your student. As a reminder, please make every effort not to bring students or siblings to Curriculum Nights.

Todd Curtis  
Principal

Lisa McCubrey  
Assistant Principal

### **Important Notes:**

#### **PTO Notes**

Would you like to learn more about the Floral Street School PTO and the opportunities to help in some of the PTO projects that occur through-out the year? Do you have questions about how much time is required and what some of the projects entail? **Please join current members of the PTO for coffee and donuts in the cafeteria on Wednesday, September 30th between 9:30-10:30.** PTO members will answer your questions about opportunities to get involved, typical time commitments, and how the PTO works to support the Floral Street School teachers and staff. If you have young children, please feel free to bring them as well. If you are unable to attend but would like more information, please contact PTO President Lisa Greene at [greene6365@townisp.com](mailto:greeneg6365@townisp.com). Current PTO members include: Lisa Greene, Hannah Kane, Sophia Sweeney, Denise Salmu, Kim Wackell, Jenn Owen, Teri Blum, Jen Mastromatteo, Brenda Buckley, Milissa Pisano, Lee Chipman, and Patti Wolohan.

#### **Art Department Advertisement Opportunity**

Shrewsbury High Schools Theatre Department is growing and we would like to give you this opportunity to share in our excitement. We are offering you a chance to place your personal or business ad in both our programs. That's **"TWICE THE EXPOSURE FOR A FRACTION OF THE COST."** This year's productions are *The Crucible* (11/20, 11/21) and *Anything Goes* (3/11, 3/12, 3/13, 3/14).

Please consider this unique opportunity to support these fine high school events by participating in our advertisement campaign. Your contribution will support the foundation of community theatre arts and help us keep a tradition of fine performances that are highly anticipated by the public alive. For more information or an order form please e-mail [bkonthecoast@townisp.com](mailto:bkonthecoast@townisp.com)  
AD DEADLINE IS 10/30

#### **Only ONE more Paper Falcon Flyer!**

In order to help the environment **and** save on paper and copying costs in a tough budgetary environment, we ask that you subscribe to our school's "list serv" e-mail list. Notices that are created and sent by Floral Street School will also be sent via this e-mail list. **Beginning in October, we will move to electronic-only delivery of the Falcon Flyer (the last paper Falcon Flyer will be printed September 28).** Please communicate in writing to your child's classroom teacher if you do not have an internet connection.

In order to get on the list, please go to our homepage at <http://schools.shrewsbury-ma.gov/departments/index.php?fDD=12-0>, click on the "Parents" link on the right-hand side, and select "Join our List Serv".

**The Elementary Lunch Menu** can be found at any time at:

<http://schools.shrewsbury-ma.gov/departments/division.php?fDD=20-17>

#### **Important Fall Dates:**

September 22	Grade 1 Curriculum Night, 6:45 – 8:00 pm
September 23	Grade 2 Curriculum Night, 6:45 – 8:00 pm
September 29	Grade 3 Curriculum Night, 6:45 – 8:00 pm
September 30	Grade 4 Curriculum Night, 6:45 – 8:00 pm
October 9	No School – Professional Day
October 12	No School – Columbus Day
October 13	School Picture Makeup Day
November 3	Parent Conferences (No School)
November 11	No School – Veterans' Day
November 25-27	No School – Thanksgiving Vacation